

BARTH CONFERENCE SET FOR JUNE 17-19 AT PRINCETON

"For the Sake of the World: Karl Barth and the Future of Ecclesial Theology" is the theme of a three-day conference sponsored by the Center for Barth Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary. The aim of the June 17-19 conference is to connect Barth's theology to a responsible church in the 21st century.

The conference opens at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 17, with a welcome from Princeton Seminary President Thomas Gillespie and a report on the Center for Barth Studies by George Hunsinger, CBS director. It concludes with lunch at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 19.

INVITATION TO MEMBERSHIP IN THE KARL BARTH SOCIETY

All who are interested are invited to join the Karl Barth Society of North America.

To become a member of the Barth Society, send your name, address, and annual dues of \$15.00 (\$10.00 for students) to:

Professor Russell Palmer
Dept. of Philosophy and Religion
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE 68182-0265

Checks (drawn on a U. S. bank) should be made payable to "Karl Barth Society." *Members whose dues were last paid prior to June of last year are urged to send in their annual renewal.*

The Thursday sessions will be held at Trinity Episcopal Church. The theme of the opening session at 2:30 p.m. will be "The Future of Dialogue," with a presentation by John Hart (University of Oxford) on "The Barth/Brunner Correspondence." Daniel Migliore (Princeton Seminary) will be the respondent.

Following the opening session a reception will be held at 4:30 at the Center of Theological Inquiry.

On Thursday evening at 7:30, the theme will be "The Future of Ecumenism." Barth's biographer, Eberhard Busch (University of Göttingen), will speak on "Karl Barth and the Jews." Katherine Sonderegger (Middlebury College), author of *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew: Karl Barth's "Doctrine of Israel,"* will be the respondent.

On Friday, June 18, again at Trinity Episcopal Church, "The Future of Social Witness" will be the theme of the morning session. Clifford Green (Hartford Theological Seminary) will present a paper on "Karl Barth and the Politics of the New World Order," with a response by David Hollenbach, S.J. (Boston College).

Worship at 11:00 will be led by William Sloane Coffin Jr.

The first afternoon session at 1:30 will be devoted to "The Future of Christian Ethics." Caroline Simon (Hope College) will speak on "Barth on Christian Love" and John Webster (University of Oxford) will respond.

A video of a 1961 BBC interview with Karl Barth will be shown at 3:30 on Friday afternoon in the Auditorium of the Mackay Campus Center.

KBSNA Executive to meet in Princeton

A meeting of the Executive of the Karl Barth Society of North America has been called by David Demson, General Secretary of the Society, during the Princeton conference. Members of the Executive will meet over dinner in the Mackay Campus Center of Princeton Seminary at 6:00 on Thursday, June 17. There will be a discussion about what should be the relation between the KBSNA and the Center for Barth Studies.

It will be followed at 4:00 (also in the Mackay Campus Center Auditorium) by a panel discussion on "The Future of Barth Studies" chaired by Bruce McCormack (Princeton Seminary). Members of the panel will be Eberhard Busch, Hans-Anton Drewes, and John Webster.

The program for the banquet at 6:30 on Friday evening in the Mackay Campus Center Main Lounge will include an address by John Godsey (Wesley Theological Seminary) and music by the Mozart String Quartet.

The Saturday sessions will be held in the Mackay Campus Center Auditorium. The final day of the conference will begin with a 9:00 session on "The Future of Doctrine." It will feature a presentation by Caroline Schröder (University of Bonn). Her topic will be "Karl Barth on the Providence of God." The respondent will be Randall Zachmann (University of Notre Dame).

The closing session at 11:00 on Saturday will consider "The Future of Eschatology." George Hunsinger (CBS, Princeton Seminary) will speak on "Barth on Time and Eternity." Brian Leftow (Fordham University) will be the respondent.

There is no registration fee for the conference. Further information may be obtained from the Center for Barth Studies, Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries, P.O. Box 111, Princeton NJ 08542-0111. The e-mail address is: barth.studies@ptsem.edu.

Information is also available at Princeton Seminary's web site: www.ptsem.edu/know/events/1999/barth

The Center for Barth Studies, established in 1997, works to promote the theological contribution of Karl Barth in both the academy and the church. The center is acquiring a complete collection of writings by and about Barth and will serve as a clearinghouse for Barth scholarship and activities. Its program will include conferences, research opportunities, discussion groups, and publications. Its facilities are open by arrangement to scholars, students, pastors, and laypersons.

KBS program held at 1998 AAR/SBL meeting

The Fall 1998 program of the Karl Barth Society at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature was held November 20-21 in Orlando.

"Supplementary Apologetics" — Walter Lowe

The Friday afternoon session opened with a paper entitled "Supplementary Apologetics" by Walter Lowe (Emory University). Lowe pointed out what he takes to be an anomaly in Barth's *Römerbrief*, i.e. Barth's

statement that "Our memory of God accompanies us always" and that this is a problem and a warning. Reflecting on this anomaly as it relates to Barth's position on natural theology, Lowe presented a "supplementary, incidental, and implicit" apologetics by drawing selectively on the thought of Derrida and Kant, and thus interpreting chapter V of *Church Dogmatics* II/1. This then moves him beyond the analysis of Barth's *Römerbrief* presented in his 1993 book *Theology and Difference: The Wound of Reason*.

Lowe argued that one's understanding of idolatry and apologetics changes when the deconstructionist view of presence, immediacy, and objectivity is clarified in the light of Barth's rejection of direct knowledge of God and his affirmation of God's mediated immediacy in *C.D.* II/1. Lowe draws selectively on Kant and Derrida to understand Barth himself better and ultimately to find a common ground "beyond the impasse." Lowe believes that the fact that God's revelation has certainty, and that autonomous human knowledge does not, implies "a derivative, dependent, and yet meaningful form of apologetic." Barth's critique of autonomous human knowledge is seen by Lowe as one arm of Barth's apologetic, while God's primary and secondary objectivity is the other. Even though human knowledge of God is mediated and is thus not non-objective, there is no difference of kind or degree, but only of form.

Barth's analysis, Lowe concludes, has certain apologetic "effects." The effect of the "right arm, even as a possibility," calls into question autonomous human knowing. This is said to reinforce the work of the left arm. Finally Lowe proposes that Derrida's critique of presence shows how strong human longing for presence actually is. This is where he locates Barth's view that "our memory of God accompanies us always." In his view there is an accessible radical immediacy, but it is mediated. While theologians today tend to collapse knowledge of God, immediate experience of God, and being saved, Lowe suggests that it is just by affirming presence and one's participation in it in the mode of presence that frees us to witness to what God has accomplished in Jesus Christ without claiming superiority in relation to others.

During the discussion several observations were made: (1) the Thomistic character of Lowe's proposal was noted; (2) it was suggested that *theosis* language could be used to speak of our participation in God; (3) it was suggested that Barth was more and more open to mysticism as the *C.D.* progressed; (4) it was also said that Barth ceased to refer directly to Christ for about 70 pages in *C.D.* II/1. This last remark generated the response that Barth actually singles out the humanity of Christ in that section and uses sacramental language to show how our human knowledge of God participates in Jesus' human knowledge of God.

“Karl Barth’s Christology: Its Basic Chalcedonian Character”—George Hunsinger

After a brief intermission, George Hunsinger presented his paper entitled “Karl Barth’s Christology: Its Basic Chalcedonian Character” (a title that recalls—and responds to—Waldrop’s book on the alleged *Alexandrian* character of Barth’s Christology). His main aim was to show that Christ’s work presupposes his person, while his person conditions the work of salvation. In other words, it is essential to realize that Jesus is both truly God and truly human, and that it would lead to a serious misunderstanding of salvation to think of Jesus as just a human figure. Hunsinger argued that the Chalcedonian definition is not determined exclusively by soteriological interests because it seeks to explicate the deep structure of the NT witness to Christ’s person. Thus Chalcedon is both constitutive (with respect to Christ’s person in the work of salvation) and regulative (with respect to the church’s reading of scripture). In the unity-in-distinction and distinction-in-unity of Christ’s two natures we have an abiding mystery.

According to Hunsinger, while Barth presented one of the most fully elaborated Chalcedonian christologies in history, his christology is regularly misconstrued either as basically Alexandrian or Docetic in orientation (with a deficient view of Christ’s humanity) or as basically Antiochene or Nestorian in orientation (with a deficient view of Christ’s deity). Hunsinger believes that Barth is probably the first theologian in church history to deliberately alternate between and “Alexandrian” and “Antiochene” idiom because, as Barth saw it, this reflects the incomprehensible mystery of what is known when Christ is known. This meant that the incarnation could not be “contained by a conceptual scheme.” Hunsinger traced the failure on the part of those theologians who would classify Barth either as basically Alexandrian or as basically Antiochene to the fact that they do not attend to Barth’s dialectical juxtaposition of the two strains of Christology in order to make sense of the mystery of the incarnation.

To those who would suggest that Barth’s view of Jesus’ humanity is insufficient, Hunsinger responds that their position is not grounded in technical considerations but rather in a sense that for Jesus’ humanity to be complete he cannot also be “complete in deity.” From Barth’s point of view it is precisely Christ’s person that cannot be explained but only acknowledged and understood as the mystery that it is. Deity and humanity must be understood from the incarnation itself rather than in some abstract way. Similarly, to those who would suggest that Barth’s view of Jesus Christ is Nestorian, Hunsinger responds that they have failed to take into account Barth’s unique dialectic of juxtaposition.

Hunsinger went on to sketch three other innovations of Barth’s Chalcedonian Christology: (1) he actualized the traditional conception of the incarnation and thus moved away from more static understandings; (2) he personalized the saving significance of Christ’s death and thus moved away from a more legalistic understanding; and (3) he contemporized the consequences of Christ’s resurrection and thus, while Barth insisted upon the “historicity” of Christ’s resurrection, he placed the accent on the fact that our present reconciliation is actualized in and through the very power of the resurrection now. The resurrection means Christ’s real presence and our “contemporaneity to him.” The resurrection means that Christ is present to all people as their Mediator and Advocate without being restricted by time or place.

During the discussion a number of observations were made: (1) one questioner wondered whether or not Hunsinger understated Barth’s revision of Chalcedon and whether Barth had in fact identified Christ’s person and work, thus obliterating their distinction. Hunsinger responded that Barth had maintained a unity in distinction and that one cannot lose the distinction. (2) Another questioner thought that perhaps Hunsinger’s way of stating Christology in the indicative did not allow for the mystery to come to light as a mystery. (3) Another questioner asked how one might teach Barth to undergraduates without having them read 1,000 pages. (4) Yet another questioner stressed the importance of the *enhypostasis*. And finally (5) another questioner suggested that there were problems with Chalcedon itself. It was said that Chalcedon did not say anything wrong even though it followed Leo’s Tome, but that it did not say anything about the *hypostasis* and thus created future troubles to be solved.

Robert Jenson’s *Systematic Theology*

On Saturday morning, November 21, there was a discussion of Robert Jenson’s *Systematic Theology, Volume I, The Triune God* (Oxford University Press). This session began with a presentation by Robert Jenson. He discussed how his theology related to Barth’s theology, noting that because his theology is a system it would be embarrassing to Barth! Aquinas says that God’s essence is knowable by God and his saints. History and not math is the mode of God’s knowing. The Word in the beginning is with God and we are permitted to overhear this. Jenson explained that he had been Barth’s devoted disciple ever since he read his book on Anselm and that there is a material relation to Barth, but that he hasn’t taken over any large batch of particular solutions. He noted that his hyper-Cyrillean Christology comes from Luther.

Jenson indicated that he understood that the doctrine of the Trinity is the identification of God; that God needs identifying; that the doctrine of the Trinity

becomes the explanation rather than a puzzle; and that the doctrine of the Trinity identifies God in such a way that it leads one to be suspicious of antecedent bits and pieces of another identification of God. He further indicated that theology should be seen as a christological metaphysics in the sense that all being should be seen as rooted in the Incarnate Christ. His book, he noted, is full of revisionary metaphysics, which opposes our antecedent thinking. It is his opinion that it is only our inherited metaphysics that keeps us from thinking correctly.

Jenson noted that God is above all life—God is *the* life, and that God is like a fugue. God has time and does not transcend time by being remote from it but by having infinite time himself. We want to speak of time in God even though this may seem bothersome. Jenson also insisted that God's covenant will, to and from eternity, is not something other than the will that occurs in the crucified and risen Christ. There can thus be no theodicy and no *logos asarkos*. God might have been this, but we cannot say anything about what he might have been because all we actually see is Jesus Christ himself. Finally, Jenson noted how he departs from Barth especially with respect to the Holy Spirit. Barth, he says, is classically western. What dominates Barth's thinking is the fact that the Spirit is the bond of love. Jenson noted the Orthodox view that personalizes the Spirit and suggested that we think about the Spirit's own initiative in the Trinitarian life.

After Jenson's opening comments, Michael Root presented his assessment of *Systematic Theology* Volume I, exploring Jenson's potentially ecumenically fruitful thought while also pointing out what he considered to be theologically problematic. Root noted that Jenson's work is open ecumenically to what can be learned from all sides and argues that he uses the language of participation without confusing nature and grace. He also noted that Jenson has a nuanced view of the *filioque*.

Root's difficulties centered on two interrelated matters. First, Jenson sees the repetition of the relations of the Father, Son, and Spirit as one that is being realized in time rather than one that exists before, above, and after time. This leads Jenson to think that Barth must be corrected. Root, however, believes that Barth has understood the relation between time and eternity quite correctly. Thus he is unconvinced that the future should be privileged over the present and past in the way Jenson proposes. Indeed he argues that Jenson is unable to present the protological development that accompanied the eschatological development within prophecy, i.e., the claim that the Lord will not only restore Israel but is also the one who rules as creator. According to Root, Jenson's privileging the future also results in the evacuation of the *monarchie* of the Father with the suggestion that the Spirit liberates the Father and Son

for relationship. Root wonders whether or not Jenson has replaced the problem of the *filioque* with an even greater problem of a *spirituque* of the begetting of the Son and the *monarchie* of the Father.

Root himself prefers Barth's treatment of the relation of time and eternity in *C.D.* II/1, where Barth speaks of God's pre-temporal, supra-temporal and post-temporal eternity. With this understanding, Barth seemingly did not have to reduce God's existence to events that happen in history. Root thinks Jenson's statement that "God is what happens to Jesus and the world" compromises the important fact that God is the same before, above, and over his works and without them (Barth). In other words, Root believes that Jenson's thinking compromises God's sovereignty within history. In addition, Root believes that although Jenson, like Barth, says that God would have been the same God without creation and incarnation, Jenson's thinking, unlike Barth's, does not reflect that fact because it leaves the content of God's freedom ambiguous. Barth fills that content in with continued statements about the gratuity of God's actions *ad extra* while Jenson simply suggests that that is how things might have been and that we thus cannot say anything beyond that. Because Barth understands God's freedom in this way, Root believes that he also has more room to maneuver when it comes to a discussion of sin and evil—thus, unlike Jenson, he can say that God's being is not other than what occurs in the history of the crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ, but God's being is not realized there and there alone. Jenson's systematic presentation of God as "what happens to Jesus and the world" gives him far less room to maneuver. This, according to Root, makes Jenson less able to say that God is simply opposed to sin and evil.

Next, Paul Molnar presented his reflections on Jenson's *Systematic Theology* Volume I, noting the importance of this work because it emphasizes that God can only be known with certainty on the ground of the gospel (which opposes thought forms that are indebted to Aristotle and Plato) and because Christ's resurrection plays a central part in his theological reflections. He also noted that Jenson demonstrated an admirable knowledge of Aquinas, Barth, Pannenberg, Edwards, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory Palamas, and that, unlike many modern theologians, he intends to make room in his thinking for Christ's active mediation of himself to us today with a renewed emphasis on the Holy Spirit.

Molnar suggested four important areas of concern: (1) the proper relation of the immanent and economic Trinity, (2) how to understand the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, (3) how to understand Jesus' resurrection, and (4) how to understand the relation between time and eternity.

Molnar pointed out that, while Jenson insists upon God's freedom, he also accepts Rahner's axiom of the

identity of the immanent and economic Trinity, and this leads to such puzzling statements as “Jesus’ human action and presence is without mitigation God’s action and presence” and “the events in Jerusalem and on Golgotha are themselves inner-triune events” and “the Spirit who will raise the Son finds his own identity only in the *totus Christus*, in the Son who is identified with us.” In Molnar’s view such statements seem to make God indistinguishable from history and imply that the Spirit does not eternally have his identity but must find it in history.

Regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ, Molnar argued that Barth rejected the idea that Jesus’ humanity as such disclosed his divinity and thus distinguished the immanent and economic Trinity in a way that Jenson does not. Molnar indicated that Barth believed that the *logos asarkos* was important in asserting God’s freedom in time and eternity even though it has at times led to a false view of God’s freedom in revelation. Molnar asserted that, because Jenson did not make this clear distinction, he rejected any notion of a *logos asarkos* and thus was led to confuse Christ’s deity and humanity and eventually to make God dependent on the course of history with what appeared to be an adoptionistic view of Jesus’ Sonship: “God is what happens between Jesus and his Father in their spirit . . . God is what happens to Jesus and the world.” Indeed Jenson believes that “the Son in trinitarian use” does not “first denote a simply divine entity. Primally, it denotes the claim Jesus makes for himself in addressing God as Father . . . this Son is an eternally divine Son only in and by this relation.”

Jenson’s view of the resurrection, Molnar contended, provides even more evidence of his adoptionistic view of Jesus’ Sonship because, according to Jenson, Jesus is “Son in that he is resurrected.” Indeed Jenson writes: “Jesus would not be the Word without the Resurrection.” Molnar argued that these statements reflect the fact that, for Jenson, events that take place in history are allowed to determine or define God’s independent existence and nature, and that this misperception of Christ’s person leads to the idea that his work of salvation is in some sense dependent upon the community: “the very existence of the Gospels as a corpus depends on the community constituted by the faith that so judges.” Another problem that Molnar noted in Jenson’s understanding of the resurrection is that, instead of arguing that the resurrection was an event in the life history of Jesus which gave meaning to the church’s subsequent faith, Jenson argues that the risen Lord needs no other body than the church into which he rose. Molnar contended that this thinking fails to do justice to the historicity of the resurrection and also fails to distinguish Christ from the church, once more compromising God’s freedom *in se* and *ad extra* and dispensing with the church’s present need for

the Holy Spirit to unite Christians to their heavenly head.

Finally, Molnar discussed the relation between time and eternity, indicating that Jenson believes that the gospel contradicts locating God above time as one who is immune from time and passibility and the view that makes only the Father transcendent. Jenson proposes, following Gregory of Nyssa, that God’s deity is “temporal infinity. God is not infinite because he extends indefinitely but because no temporal activity can keep up with the activity that he is.” Jenson thus appeals to a statement that Gregory made against the Arians: “If they [the Arians] must divide eternity, let them reverse their doctrine and find the mark of deity in endless futurity . . . let them guide their thinking by what is to come and is real in hope rather than by what is past and old.” Molnar pointed out that, in his argument against Eunomius, Gregory actually maintained that God’s eternity consists both in endlessness and in his being without beginning, and so actually portrays the position advocated by Jenson as a choice one might make only if one were confused about the Triune God’s eternity. Molnar concluded that Jenson’s emphasis on futurity once again demonstrates his failure to distinguish between the immanent and economic Trinity and ultimately illustrates a compromise of God’s freedom with the idea that God is becoming who he will be by means of the events of the cross and resurrection. Molnar suggested that a proper understanding could be achieved here with the retrieval of Barth’s view of God’s pre-temporal, supra-temporal, and post-temporal existence. Barth, it seems, did not choose futurity over the past and present because God is fully God in all three ways.

After a brief intermission, Robert Jenson began his response by suggesting in a good natured way that the program planners should have provided him with a defender! He observed that one would not have guessed from the papers that his book was supposed to be a “cheery” work. Therefore, he concluded the papers must be wrong!

Then Jenson directly addressed the questions raised about his book. He noted that while he wished to relocate the distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity—or replace it—Root and Molnar presupposed the appropriateness of the usual thinking in this matter and thus concluded that he blurred the distinction. Granting that he might be wrong on this, Jenson nevertheless claimed that the old distinction derives from Aristotle and one should not therefore suppose that his understanding is wrong. Jenson further suggested that all the difficulties identified by Molnar can be summed under the idea that he (Jenson) allows history to determine God’s being. Jenson maintained that he does no such thing. Instead, he claimed that he followed scripture when he

said that God determines his own being through events in God and in time. Molnar's suspicion that he might be too associated with Hegel, Jenson said, is not only justified but he believes it is a virtue and not a sin. Pannenberg also believed that if Hegel hadn't said that all of the end was in the beginning, his theology might not have ended in a disaster.

Jenson's response to Root's censure of him for criticizing Barth (with the suggestion that Barth was right and Jenson was wrong) was to say that Root is wrong. Jenson did not believe he had compromised God's sovereignty at all. Rather he was trying to affirm an opposition between the statements that propose that everything lies in God's will and that God also opposes sin and evil. Jenson claimed not to want to synthesize these oppositions and objected to anyone using standards antecedent to the Bible to speak about God's freedom.

The discussion that followed centered on the fact that it is not enough to respond to the various criticisms simply by saying that theologians' presuppositions were in conflict because some thought in old ways that were in fact in opposition to Jenson's new proposals. It was suggested that the deeper question concerned which specific object was determining the presuppositions that led to the criticisms of Jenson. According to Jenson that object was the gospel. According to Molnar the gospel never suggested that Jesus needed no other risen body besides the church. George Hunsinger brought the session to a close, remarking that the kind of discussion that had taken place was a benefit to all scholars present.

Editor's note: Thanks to Paul Molnar for preparing this report.

KBS program to be held at AAR/SBL in Boston, November 19-20, 1999

Plans are underway for the Barth Society program prior to this year's AAR/SBL Annual Meeting in Boston in November. As usual, there will be one session on Friday afternoon, November 19 (the day before the official beginning of the Annual Meeting) and another session on Saturday morning, November 20. Details will be included in the next issue of this Newsletter.

BOOK REVIEW

Karl Barth and the Theology of the Lord's Supper: A Systematic Investigation by Paul D. Molnar (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 333pp.

Reviewed by George Hunsinger

Anyone looking for an incisive analysis of how Karl Barth differs from other prominent contemporary theologians should read this book. Molnar, a professor

of systematic theology at St. John's University in Queens, N.Y., emerges from this study as a vigorous critic who is both perceptive and formidable. Of the three theologians who receive the most sustained attention—Moltmann, Pannenberg, and Rahner—Moltmann is simply devastated, Pannenberg is deftly unmasked, and Rahner is called seriously into question. Other theologians subjected to searching criticism include Kaufman, McFague, E. Johnson, Wainwright, Knitter and Hick. This is a book in which the footnotes must be read in order to get the full force of the critiques. Even Jüngel does not come through entirely unscathed. Aligning himself squarely with Barth, Molnar tells us exactly what he finds wanting on the current theological scene. Friends of Barth may rejoice at this very keen intellect in their midst.

What Molnar finds wanting is essentially that the above theologians all manage to undermine the deity of God, for in various ways they each see God's relationship to the creature as one of mutual conditioning. It is as amazing as it is instructive to see just how much mileage Molnar can extract from this basic insight.

The unfortunate Moltmann, for example, has retracted his best arguments from *Theology of Hope*. In *The Way of Jesus Christ* and other recent writings, his position on Christ's resurrection has come to resemble the views he once rejected. Where he once relied on the idea of *creatio ex nihilo*, he now espouses a woeful panentheism that not only requires a naturalistic and historicizing version of the resurrection, but also sees nature and grace, explicitly, as conditioning one another.

Though not posing so easy a target, Pannenberg also finally represents a kind of dialectical and historicizing monism which explains the resurrection by appealing to a power supposedly inherent in history and experience. Since the being of God is said to change "retroactively" by what happens in the course of history, God finally depends on the creation and its history in order to be God.

Rahner, whose difficult theology receives the book's fullest and most provocative dismantling, exhibits similar flaws. Insofar as grace is thought to be ingredient in nature, the uniqueness of Christ's person and work cannot be properly sustained, and the sovereign freedom of grace is seriously compromised.

Although Molnar carefully traces these flaws back to their roots in theological method, his various critiques might have been strengthened in two ways.

First, he does not always sufficiently acknowledge the tensions, ambiguities and complexities—including what Barth would have called the "happy inconsistencies"—in the writings of his principal opponents, nor does he always take notice of changes that have occurred over the years in their views. One

feels this problem especially in the case of Rahner, though also to some extent of Pannenberg. In other words, Molnar's analysis might have been more nuanced. But that would only have served to strengthen a strong and imposing case.

Perhaps more serious, though still relatively minor, is a matter of terminological precision. The term "docetism" has two uses in contemporary discussion, one proper, the other improper. Properly used, it means that Jesus' humanity is overwhelmed or truncated by its union with his deity so that his humanity is merely apparent. Improperly used, on the other hand, it means that his incarnation—the very union of his deity and humanity—is merely apparent. The improper use confuses docetism with Nestorianism. Unfortunately, Molnar regularly uses the term "docetism" in the improper sense, though in any given case his critical analysis of the substance to which the label is misapplied would seem to be unerring. Nevertheless, a lamentable note of confusion is introduced at these points.

When we turn from Molnar's critiques to his constructive proposal, the results are less successful. He wants to present Barth's "theology of the Lord's Supper." In effect, a better job is done with the theology *behind* Barth's view of the Lord's Supper, so to speak, than with his theology *of* the Lord's Supper. Barth actually drops a number of tantalizing remarks in passing throughout the *Church Dogmatics* on the Lord's Supper, but unfortunately Molnar scarcely picks up any of them. His account stays at a very general level (though there it is very good). One would never know from reading Molnar, for example, that Barth had a view not only about Christ's "real presence" in the eucharist, but more to the point about "the real presence of Christ's *body and blood*"—a view that was arguably an improvement over what we read on this question, say, in the Heidelberg Catechism. Nor would one know that Barth saw the Lord's Supper as pertaining primarily to the *renewal* of our *communion* with Christ through *faith*. Molnar expends so much effort in trying to "reconstruct" the general background to this unwritten portion of the *Dogmatics*, and in refuting general errors of theological method in other theologians, that he pays insufficient attention to what Barth actually did write on the eucharist.

What many of us sympathetic to Barth really want to know is just why we should follow him (as Molnar insists we should) in his odd views about the sacraments instead of following theologians like Luther or Calvin, to say nothing of contemporary theologians like Jenson, Torrance, or von Balthasar. On this matter the Moltmanns, Pannenberg and Rahners (though not entirely without merit, of course) are fundamentally uninteresting. Why couldn't Barth at least have followed Luther and Calvin by seeing

baptism and the Lord's Supper as forms of God's Word, for example, and to that extent as "means of grace"? Why did he have to make them into merely "means of gratitude" in response to grace? Molnar glosses over the profound shift in the course of Barth's *Dogmatics* away from a favorable use of the term "sacrament" for anything other than Jesus Christ (a shift carefully analyzed in Jüngel's *Barth Studien*, a discussion Molnar unfortunately does not cite). It is not enough for Molnar to say that we should not abandon the term sacrament. Nor is it enough for him to show that a general continuity exists here in the *Dogmatics* between the earlier and the later volumes.

What we need, it seems to me, is an account which shows just why Barth's rejection of the term "sacrament" was not a necessary development in his theology, and why in taking this path Barth entered into contradiction with some of the deepest impulses in his entire project, not to mention with virtually the entire ecumenical church.

George Hunsinger is Director of the Center for Barth Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Barth-Bonhoeffer conference planned for summer of 2000

"*Christ the Center: The Legacy of Barth and Bonhoeffer for Today*" is the theme of a conference being planned for July 24-26, 2000, on the campus of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Conference Director Wayne Stumme has announced that the following presenters have agreed to participate: Clifford Green (Hartford Seminary), George Hunsinger (CBS, Princeton Seminary), Lois Malcolm (Luther Seminary), Martin Rumscheidt (Atlantic School of Theology), Katherine Sonderegger (Middlebury College), John Webster (Oxford University), William Werpehowski (Villanova University), and Josiah Young III (Wesley Seminary).

Sponsors include Luther Seminary, the Center for Barth Studies, the Karl Barth Society of North America, the International Bonhoeffer Society English Language Section, and the Institute for Mission in the U.S.A. of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

In recent years Stumme, now retired from directing the ELCA Institute for Mission, has brought together Lutheran and Barthian theologians in a series of conferences to explore the significance of Barth's theology for the ministry of the church.

Further information about next year's Barth-Bonhoeffer conference may be obtained from Wayne Stumme at 198 6th St. East, #604, St. Paul, MN 55101-1948, telephone (651) 291-7550. His e-mail address is: wcstumme@aol.com

NOTES

How Karl Barth Changed My Mind

Donald K. McKim (Memphis Theological Seminary) writes that *How Karl Barth Changed My Mind*, the collection of essays he edited which was published during the Barth centennial year (1986), has been reprinted and is now available from Wipf and Stock Publishers, 790 East 11th Ave., Eugene, Oregon 97401. www.academicbooks.com

Karl Barth's Theology of Relations

Gary W. Deddo has published *Karl Barth's Theology of Relations* (Peter Lang, 1999). The subtitle is "Trinitarian, Christological, and Human: Towards an Ethic of the Family."

Barth at Duquesne

William M. Thompson (Duquesne University) writes that he taught a Ph.D. seminar on *Church Dogmatics* II/1 (Doctrine of God) last summer, and "the students—unanimously—were impressed and even deeply moved by the volume."

Material for the Newsletter is always welcome. Please send comments, brief articles, news items, reviews or book notices, etc., to the Editor:

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U.S. dollars, please

We have been asked whether membership dues for the KBSNA can be remitted via checks drawn on banks outside the United States. The problem is that our local bank charges an exorbitant fee for non-U.S. checks which exceeds the value of the check! Nor are we equipped to accept credit cards. Accordingly, we ask that dues be paid either with a check drawn on a U.S. bank or in cash (U.S. currency). We regret the inconvenience this causes to our Canadian and overseas members, but at this point we see no workable alternative.

KARL BARTH SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED